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Letters

Ultra-Low Density

Dear Editor:

I would like to make a few comments on Ron Curran's recent article on the deterioration of Los Angeles due to uncontrolled growth ["The Killing of L.A.," *L.A. Weekly*, Oct. 9-15]. To begin with, Mr. Curran's "place of idyllic orange groves and open space" translates, in reality, to an endless suburb with lots of *private* open space, enjoyed by the privileged owners of single-family homes with endless back yards. He correctly observes that the city suffers from "boiling-point urban sprawl" — caused by the ultra-low density that is behind the jammed freeways and the misery of endless commutes. He essentially supports the Westwood homeowners, who forget too easily how they have ferociously blocked most of UCLA's attempts to build student housing in Westwood Village.

As for Russell Baker's attack on Councilman Zev Yaroslavsky ["Slow Growth or Fast Talk," same issue], the logic behind it is, frankly, amusing: "It is better to have no initiative at all, rather than having some type of initiative; doing nothing is better than doing something." The logic behind this logic is beyond my logic.

—Laz Papademetropoulos
Pasadena

Fellow Travelers

Dear Editor:

I am writing to thank Craig Lee for his wonderful report on the Washington March for Gay Rights ["Beyond Sex and AIDS," *L.A. Weekly*, Oct. 23-29]. As a lesbian who was there only in spirit, I greatly appreciate his effort to help all people — heterosexual and homosexual — experience and understand the significance of this historical event. When I read on your Insights page (same issue) about the female demonstrator who was allegedly given a genital exam after her arrest and ended up vaginally lacerated, I wanted to scream in anger. Mr. Lee's article helped calm me, and helped convince me that there is hope and that the event was a success. Thank you, Craig Lee!

—Terri M. Ford
Los Angeles

Dear Editor:

I was impressed and touched by Craig Lee's article on the march on Washington. It touched all the right points about the reasons for the march, and I hope he is right in saying that it is not going to stop there. I only wish I had been there.

—Andre Soares
Los Angeles

Steer Shy

Dear Editor:

The U.S. government obscenely projects power in the Persian Gulf, sowing destruction and threatening to ignite World War III, and the *Weekly* features a flag-waving bozo in a sailor suit on its front cover? ["Rah! Rah! The U.S. Navy" by Richard Meltzer, Oct. 2-8.] If this is an attempt to be subtly sardonic, it fails miserably; the article's overall effect is to numb the reader to the pain of the war now being waged in the Gulf and the war that is being prepared, by presenting a presumed "human side" of the ghoulish naval death machine.

Meltzer's story turns out to be a dredged-up excerpt from an article he did in the San Diego *Reader*, August 1985 — when the *Constellation* was on training maneuvers, *before* it went to the Persian Gulf.

The *Constellation* returned to home port last week. The news reported a hero's welcome from sailors' families and friends, but there were no protesters. There seems to be a gap in popular awareness, in which the Navy is seen as a comparatively benign branch of the armed services, but today's motto really is "Join the Navy and Nuke the World." A 1984 Rand Corporation study, *Escalation in the Middle East and Persian Gulf*, stated:

> Naval forces play a(n) . . . important role in globalizing regional conflicts. This is because: (1) naval forces are the easiest to deploy in regional conflicts, where they either become instruments of intervention or targets; (2) to have naval combatants in close proximity with one another is destabilizing in a crisis because the general rule in naval warfare is that whoever shoots first wins; and (3) war at sea, once begun, is very difficult to contain geographically . . .

In this light, the "human interest" angle is useless at best, poisonous at worst, because by creating sympathy for the sailors (who are just doing their jobs), it puts a human face on the death machine.

—Al Borada
North Hollywood

The Payback

Dear Editor:

Excuse the late date on this thank-you note; it should have been written a couple of years ago. That's when I began to notice that the *Weekly* was practicing the kind of journalism that serves its community by focusing on the realities rather than on the popular biases. Your in-depth stories on touchy subjects must ruffle a lot of feathers, and I presume you take a lot of flack. So here's another voice saying "Thank you." I hope you hear that often enough to help you keep the faith.

—Don Bustany
Los Angeles

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